

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 07390 101640Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 SP-02 ICA-20 AID-05 EB-08
NSC-05 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00
FRB-01 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 LAB-04
SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-02 AGRE-00 L-03 H-02 TRSY-06
/126 W

-----061429 110132Z /61

R 101732Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6001
INFO AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

UNCLAS LONDON 07390

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, UK, SF
SUBJECT: UK - SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS DATELINED JOHANNESBURG, BRITAIN'S RELATIVE IMPORTANCE AS A TRADING PARTNER WITH SOUTH AFRICA IS DECLINING. WHILE MAINTAINING ITS POSITION AS THE SINGLE LARGEST EXPORT MARKET FOR SOUTH AFRICAN GOODS, THE UK DECLINED IN 1977 TO SOUTH AFRICA'S THIRD LARGEST SUPPLIER -- FROM FIRST POSITION IN 1975.
2. ACCORDING TO FIGURES RECENTLY PUBLISHED BY ITS DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE, SOUTH AFRICA IMPORTED GOODS WORTH R844.7 MILLION FROM BRITAIN IN 1977, APPROXIMATELY 16.4 PERCENT OF TOTAL IMPORTS (ALL FIGURES EXCLUDE GOLD BULLION, ARMS AND OIL). THIS REPRESENTS A DECLINE OF R185 MILLION FROM THE 1976 FIGURE.
3. SOUTH AFRICAN EXPORTS TO THE UK IN 1977 TOTALED R1.3 BILLION, UP FROM R1 BILLION IN 1976, AND CONSTITUTED NEARLY 23 PERCENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN GROSS EXPORT EARNINGS.

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4. BRITAIN'S DECLINING RELATIVE IMPORTANCE AS A SOUTH AFRICAN TRADING PARTNER IS ALSO ILLUSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT IN 1970, IMPORTS FROM THE UK WERE 22 PERCENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN TOTAL, WHILE THE PROPORTION OF EXPORTS TO THE UK WAS APPROXIMATELY 29 PERCENT.

BREWSTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRADE, FOREIGN MARKETS, REPORTS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON07390
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780199-0466
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780574/aaaaclick.tel
Line Count: 62
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c64f30a1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2737512
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UK - SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE
TAGS: ETRD, UK, SF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c64f30a1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014